**Culture**

**Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts with which the members of society use to understand their world and one another.**

“One of the remarkable things about America is that nearly all of our families originally came from someplace else... It’s a source of our strength and something that we can all take pride in.” – President Barack Obama

“The longer we listen to one another – with real attention – the more commonality we will find in all our lives. That is, if we are careful to exchange with one another life stories and not simply opinions”. - Barbara Deming

“If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.” – Margaret Mead

“Normal is in the eye of the beholder” – Whoopi Goldberg

“A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people – Mahatma Gandhi

“Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their soul, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand that their neighbor is, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same questions.” - Paulo Coelho

“Any good teacher knows how important it is to connect with students and understand our culture.” – Adora Svitak

“Learning a foreign language, and the culture that goes with it, is one of the most useful things we can do to broaden the empathy and imaginative sympathy and cultural outlook of children.” – Michael Gove

“Corporate culture matters. How management chooses to treat its people impacts everything – for better or for worse. – Simon Sinek

“The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts.” – Charles Darwin

“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.” – Mahatma Gandhi

**4 Stages of being Culturally Responsive**

These do not act in isolation. You will see that these are not experienced in isolation but at times they can be integrated, overlapped or one stage serves as a precursor to another stage. Be aware that all 4 stages are needed, but to be engaged is the ultimate goal.

**Activity: Identify the most prominent culture groups within your school community. Place them on this graphic organizer chart based on your perceived level of competence with each group.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage 1: Being Aware** | **Stage 2: Being Curious** |
| **Stage 3: Learning** | **Stage 4: Engaged** |

Adapted from: Cultural Competence Handbook – Fairfax Network, Fairfax Country Public Schools